

Remarks/Arguments:

Claims 1-8, 10, 15, 16, and 18-23 were pending in this application. With this Amendment, claims 1, 5, 6, 8, 10, 15, 16, and 18 have been amended, and claim 24 has been newly added. Accordingly, claims 1-8, 10, 15, 16, and 18-24 are the pending claims in this application. Support is found in the application for the amendments made to the claims.

Claim 5 was objected to, as it was indicated that the article "the" between the words "wherein the liquid containing" and "at least one catalyst" is unnecessary. Accordingly, in order to expedite prosecution, the applicant has amended claim 5 to delete this article. Removal of this objection is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 6, 8, 10, 15, 16, and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as indefinite. In particular, several instances of insufficient antecedent bases were pointed out in claims 1, 6, 8, 10, 15, 16, and 18. The applicant has amended these claims to provide antecedent basis. Support is readily found in the initially-presented claims and in the remainder of the specification. In addition, claim 15 was objected to as indefinite for including the phrase "such as." Accordingly, the phrase "such as," as well as the modifiers following this phrase, have been deleted from claim 15. Moreover, new claim 24 recites the particular species in which the ceramic filter is made from a thermat selected from the group consisting of the three members listed in claim 24.

Claims 1, 3, 5, 7, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, and 23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Foerster et al. (U.S. 6,149,973). Claims 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 15, 16, and 21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Foerster. For the reasons discussed below, the applicant believes that these rejections are improper. The amended claims distinguish from the Foerster patent.

There are two independent claims pending in this application, method claim 1 and apparatus claim 18. Step a) of method claim 1 specifies:

"reducing the pressure in a pore structure of the channel walls relative to the surrounding atmospheric pressure to provide evacuated channel walls."

Step (b) specifies contacting a surface of *the evacuated channel walls* with the liquid containing at least one catalyst component or a precursor thereof, whereby the liquid permeates the

evacuated channel walls." Thus, claim 1 specifies a method in which the pressure is reduced in the pore structure of the channel walls relative to the surrounding atmospheric pressure BEFORE a surface of the EVACUATED channel walls is contacted with a liquid containing at least one catalyst component. Similarly, claim 18 recites corresponding features, which are even clarified further by the instant amendments. (See claim 18, which states, "means for reducing the pressure in the isolated channels ... to provide isolated and evacuated channels," and "means for dosing the isolated and evacuated channels with a predetermined quantity of liquid.") Thus, both of the independent claims specify that pressure in the isolated channels first be reduced to provide evacuated channels, and then the evacuated channel walls are contacted with a liquid containing at least one catalyst.

In the Foerster reference, on the other hand, the flow channels of the honeycomb form catalyst carrier are filled through a bottom face thereof with a fill quantity of coating dispersion that is about 10% greater than the empty volume of the flow channels. Only then, namely after the flow channels are placed in contact with the liquid (alternatively stated, after the channels are dosed with a liquid), is a vacuum applied. The applicant refers the Examiner to column 7 and, specifically, the order of steps 4 and 5. In particular, step 4 states:

Pump a fill quantity of the coating dispersion, which is about 10% greater than the empty volume of the flow channels (excess coating dispersion), into the catalyst carrier from below with the pump 11.

Step 5 states:

Open the suction valve 18 and suction off the top excess coating dispersion from the upper face into the vacuum tank 5.

Accordingly, Foerster specifies the opposite of the claimed order of steps. This difference is even further clarified by the amendments to the claims. Therefore, Foerster cannot be said to anticipate claim 1 or 18. The obviousness rejection using Foerster has also been overcome because the obviousness rejection does not address this feature as claimed.

Appin. No.: 10/591,632
Amendment Dated October 6, 2008
Reply to Office Action of July 9, 2008

JMYT-370US

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of the pending claims.

Respectfully submitted,



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Dated: October 6, 2008

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